

Staff Report – August 11, 2009
301 W. Madison Street
Mount Vernon Historic District –Baltimore City

Plan: Construct new, 6-stories apartment building on vacant lot at the SW corner of N. Howard and Madison Streets

Applicant: Meg A. Manley, WTA Development, LLC

Architect: Peter Fillat Architects

Staff Presenter: Brigitte V. Fessenden

Background

This project has been previously reviewed and approved for upscale housing by the Planning Department's UDARP in September 2007 - but not executed due to market changes. At that time the property was located outside the Mount Vernon historic district, a situation which is now changed after its (and several other properties) recent incorporation into the historic district. This project is now coming to CHAP for review and **conceptual approval**, under CHAP Design Guidelines for New Construction # 11.1 – # 11.5, as well as under Mount Vernon Historic District Design Guidelines for New Construction (adopted in 2005).

The project site is zoned B-4-1 and, in addition to CHAP review, will also be reviewed by the Planning Department under the *Market Center Urban Renewal Area* guidelines, as well as subject to *Site Plan Review* approval.

Community Input

The applicant has met with the community to discuss the proposal. A request for comments has been sent to the Mount Vernon/Belvedere Improvement Association's ARC on June 25, 2009.

Plan

The plan calls for a 6-story, 59'-6" tall, 182'-4" x 64'-4" large structure with 72 rental units, featuring a landscaped rooftop with trellises. An adjacent surface parking lot for 27 parking spaces in the rear, off Linden Avenue.

The proposed main entrance to the building will be on Madison Street, along with property management offices and communal spaces. Along the corner of N. Howard and Madison Streets there will be a recessed arcade area, with direct access to a community room. Five private entrance areas, leading to ground floor apartments, will be located along N. Howard Street. These five ground level apartments will have a "walk-up" space and built-in flower beds. Four ground floor apartment entries will be in the rear, off the parking lot area, as well as two entrances to the public corridor areas. There will be a mix of studios, one and two bedroom units.

Façade cladding material will be partially brick (on first, or on first and second story level), but be mostly a combination of painted white cementations and gray corrugated metal panels. Windows will be aluminum clad wood windows in an anodized silver/white finish. Entry doors will be painted in different colors and have small square "view windows".

Analysis

Based on the CHAP Design Guidelines for New Construction # 11.1-# 11.5 and the **Mont Vernon Historic District Guidelines for New Construction**, the plan as currently presented meets setback (*A*), *height* (*G*), and *color* (*M*) requirements, but does not comply for the following reasons:

- ***B. Orientation:*** The main entry as proposed is located on Madison Street and should face N. Howard Street as the principal street. (Howard Street apartments on first floor could be accessed from the parking lot in the rear and shifted to the Madison Street side, while allowing the main entry, as well as Office, Gym and Community Room areas to be located along Howard Street).
- ***C. Scale:*** Building mass, windows, and ornamentation are not relating to neighboring historic buildings – should be scale compatible
- ***D. Proportion:*** The various building elements do not adhere to the same historic architectural principles
- ***E. Rhythm:*** Windows are offset from story to story – should be equally aligned and compatible with neighboring historic buildings
- ***F. Massing and Composition:*** While the building has a pronounced “base” through the use of brick cladding, there is no “middle” or “cap” distinction – which needs to be articulated, in order to reduce visual impact of height, and in order to comply with the historic style of Mount Vernon
- ***J. Materials:*** The use of cementations and metal panels as siding material –must be brick or stone (veneer allowed) for walls, and wood and glass for windows and entry doors
- ***L. Windows:*** Size and location. Should be different size for first story (taller) at base level, then smaller above

Staff Findings and Recommendations

- Staff recommends that the applicant amend the plan as currently proposed, by addressing the issues raised, in order to bring the application into compliance with the CHAP’s Mount Vernon Guidelines for New Construction.
- Staff recommends that the applicant be given **conceptual approval** for **Building Setback, Height and Color,**

